

at the National Zoo here in our Nation's Capital, where seven young people were shot and wounded in a senseless act, our country still has too much violence and too much crime.

I'd like to express my concern and support to the Mayor and the entire community and, obviously, to the victims and their families. But whether it's a random act against children or a crime driven by hate, it should be obvious to all of us that we can do more, and we must do more.

Seven years ago and 3 months now, when I became President, I think there were a lot of people who really wondered whether the crime rate could be brought down in our country; whether we could become less violent. In such an atmosphere, maybe reservations about taking even sensible steps could be justified. But today we don't have any excuses. We know we can make America a safer place.

But while the crime rate may be at a 25-year low, and gun crimes may be down 35 percent, and the homicide rate may be down to a 30-year low, there's not a single soul in this room or in this entire country who believes that our children are as safe as they ought to be, that people are safe from hate crimes, no matter what their race, their religion, their condition, or their sexual orientation, that we have done all we can to make this the country it ought to be.

So if you believe that everyone counts and that everyone should have a chance to live his or her life, and if you believe we all do better when we work together, then you've got to help us pass this legislation. It's very important, and we don't have a single excuse not to do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Amy Klobuchar, Hennepin County attorney, Minnesota; and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of the District of Columbia.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Encourage Free and Fair Elections in Peru

April 25, 2000

Today I have signed into law S.J.Res. 43, expressing the sense of the Congress on the importance of free, fair, and democratic elections in Peru. Transparent elections are the foundation of a democratic society.

The people of Peru will go to the polls in the near future for a second and final round to choose their president. I urge that the concerns about the electoral process underscored by the Organization of American States mission to Peru, and by the U.S. Congress in this resolution, be fully addressed in preparations for the second round. The democratic countries of this hemisphere are united in our hope that the election be conducted in a transparent, peaceful, and statesmanlike manner. Democracy is strengthened when all Peruvians have the opportunity to debate and determine the future of Peru.

The people of the United States look forward to continuing the excellent relationship we have enjoyed with the Peruvian people and their democratically elected leaders and to strengthening the bonds that unite our countries.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 25, 2000.

NOTE: S.J. Res. 43, approved April 25, was assigned Public Law No. 106-186.

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000"

April 25, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 1287, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000."